Adhesive Capsulitis PROTOCOLS

**Background**

- **Description**
  - Typically between ages of 40-65
  - Thickenning of the capsule around the shoulder

- **Causes**:
  - Previous shoulder injury
  - Immobilization
  - Diabetes
  - Thyroid problems

- **Progression**
  - 1st Stage "Freezing" stage
    - Increased pain, decreased motion
    - Can last 1-9 months
  - 2nd Stage "Frozen" stage
    - Decreased pain, but stiffness remains
    - Can last 4-9 months
  - 3rd Stage "Thawing" stage
    - Slow return of motion
    - Can last 5 months to 2 years

- **Conservative treatment**
  - Symptoms typically resolve on their own, regardless of treatment or no treatment.
  - Physical therapy
  - Medication
  - Injections

**Stretching exercises**

**Passive Forward Flexion**

Using a broom or rod, grasp the end with hand 1 and the other end with hand 2

Use hand 2 to passively raise hand 1 up until a stretch is felt

Hold the position for 10 seconds and return to starting position

**Frequency:** 3 sets of 10 reps. 2-3 times a day.

**Goal:** Increase/maintain shoulder range of motion

**Passive Abduction**

Grasp the end of the rod with hand 1 and the other end with hand 2

Use hand 2 to passively raise hand 1 up to the side until a stretch is felt

Hold the stretch for 10 seconds and returns to starting position

**Frequency:** 3 sets of 10 reps. 2-3 times a day.

**Goal:** Increase/maintain shoulder range of motion

**Passive External Rotation**

Grasp the end of the rod with hand 1 and the middle of the rod with hand 2

Use hand 2 to passively rotate hand 1 to the side while keeping the elbow in

Hold the stretch for 10 seconds and returns to starting position

**Frequency:** 3 sets of 10 reps. 2-3 times a day.

**Goal:** Increase/maintain shoulder range of motion.
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**Forward Wall Climbers**
Patient stands facing the wall 2 feet from the wall
Slowly walk fingers up the wall as high as possible
Hold at the top for 10 seconds then slowly lower

*Frequency:* 5 times  
*Goal:* Increase/maintain shoulder range of motion.

**Side Wall Climbers**
Patient stands with their involved shoulder 2 feet from the wall
Slowly walk fingers up the wall as high as possible
Hold at the top for 10 seconds then slowly lower

*Frequency:* 5 times  
*Goal:* Increase/maintain shoulder range of motion.

**Isometric: Flexion / Extension**
Stand with good posture, squeeze shoulders back.
Bend and hold elbow at 90°.
*Flexion:* Push hand into wall.  
*Extension:* Push elbow into wall.
Hold 5 sec. Repeat TEN times.

*Frequency:* 1 set  
*Goal:* Increase strength of Deltoid Muscles.

**Isometric: Abduction / Adduction**
Stand with good posture, squeeze shoulders back.
Bend and hold elbow at 90°.
*Abduction:* Start hand on stomach.  
Pull hand away from your stomach.
*Adduction:* Start hand away from stomach.  
Pull hand into your stomach.
Hold 5 sec. Repeat TEN times.

*Frequency:* 1 set  
*Goal:* Increase strength of Rotator Cuff Muscles.
**Scapular Retraction (Shoulder Blade Squeezes)**

- Relax head and neck.
- Stand with good posture, squeeze shoulders back.
- Avoid shrugging shoulders. Keeps abs tight.
- Hold 10 sec.
- Relax shoulder. Repeat 10 times.

**Frequency:** 1 set. Three times a day.

**Goal:** Increase strength of scapular stabilizing muscles.

**Scapular Elevation (Shoulder Shrugs)**

- Relax head and neck.
- Stand with good posture.
- Squeeze shoulder up towards your ears.
- Keep abs tight and hold 10 sec.
- Relax shoulders. Repeat 10 times.

**Frequency:** 1 set. Three times a day.

**Goal:** Increase strength of scapular stabilizing muscles.

**External Rotation**

- Attach theraband to a stable object at waist level.
- Roll shoulder back and down and maintain this position.
- Place towel between elbow and side.
- Slowly rotate hand AWAY from the abdomen.
- Hold 5 sec. Repeat 10 times

**Frequency:** 1 set. Three times a day.

**Goal:** Increase strength of rotator cuff muscles.

**Internal Rotation**

- Attach theraband to a stable object at waist level.
- Roll shoulder back and down and maintain this position.
- Place towel between elbow and side.
- Slowly rotate hand TOWARDS the abdomen.
- Hold 5 sec. Repeat 10 times

**Frequency:** 1 set. Three times a day.

**Goal:** Increase strength of rotator cuff muscles.

**Side note:**

Do not perform exercises that increase your pain during or after the exercise.